

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

As business leaders, philanthropists, and supporters of your 2008 and 2012 campaigns, we write to urge you to reject the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline and to do everything in your power to accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels and to clean energy sources.

We have read of your admiration for President Lincoln, surely the most beloved of all presidents. He made one of the most important decisions of his presidency and for our nation when he decided that he would fight for the 13th Amendment to end slavery even if it took every ounce of his political capital. Your decision on Keystone may not be so weighty, but we believe it holds a comparable urgency and importance, not strictly as a pipeline decision but as a presidential choice that will signal a fundamentally new direction for our nation.

We urge you to proclaim with clarity and purpose that our nation will transition away from carbon-based fossil fuels to job-creating clean energy. As challenging as this may be, the costs pale in comparison to the human consequences of unchecked climate disruption. We must help impacted communities and industries. We cannot make these changes overnight, but we must make them. Yours is the last presidency in which it is possible for America to choose a responsible path forward for itself, before climate disruption becomes unmanageably dangerous. “Winning” a safe climate future is a long game, but we can *lose* it very quickly – on your watch. As the IEA starkly warned, continued investment in capital-intensive, long-lived fossil fuel infrastructure like Keystone XL will “lock in” emission trajectories that make catastrophic climate disruption inevitable.

The Keystone decision affords you a rare opportunity to pivot away from fossil fuels and towards a clean energy future in a way that signals the necessary sea change. The controversy associated with the decision is commensurate with its historic significance. Of course, no single decision is technically decisive with respect to climate disruption. But those who dismiss the Keystone decision as “merely symbolic” underestimate both its substantive importance and its place in history and your presidency.

This decision more than any other will signal your direction, your commitment, your resolve. It is the biggest, most explicit statement you will make in this historic moment, the moment when America turns from denial to solutions – or fails to.

Under trying circumstances and against entrenched opposition, you have led America toward a clean energy future by improving fuel efficiency standards, extending clean energy production tax credits, and asserting EPA authority to regulate coal-fired power plants. Your call to action on climate change in your State of the Union and Inaugural addresses inspired us. We thank you for this leadership, and urge you to *push* now, beyond what official Washington deems possible, toward what we know is necessary.

We pledge to support you in every way possible as you help our nation “respond to the threat of climate change, knowing that failure to do so would betray our children and future generations.”

We believe in the power and promise of clean energy. We believe it’s time to look our kids and grandkids – the prospective victims of still-preventable climate disasters – in the eye and say, “We will do what must be done to protect you. We will make this better.”  
But they won’t believe us until we *stop making it worse*. That’s why we urge you in the strongest possible terms to reject the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline.

With hope and determination to build a healthy future, and the deepest respect for your leadership,

Sincerely,

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